

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

COTE D'IVOIRE: INTERNAL UNREST 8 October 2002

Information Bulletin N° 01

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 40,000

This Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. In coordination with the ICRC and the Cote d'Ivoire Red Cross and based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation will consider international support. In addition to the needs indicated below, the Federation seeks donor support to replenish the DREF allocated.

The Situation

Intense fighting first broke out between Ivorian government troops and insurgents at around 03.00 hrs on 19 September 2002 in the three largest towns of the Ivory Coast - Abidjan, Bouaké (in the centre of the country) and Korhogo (in the north). Initial reports indicated 750 disaffected national army soldiers were protesting their impending demobilization, however the strategic nature of the insurgents' action has resulted in an increasingly complex emergency situation in the Ivory Coast - and potentially in the region. According to official figures 270 were killed and 300 injured in the initial fighting, however the official number killed has now risen to 400. The Minister of the Interior and previous President of the Republic Robert Guei, his family and some of his advisors were among those killed in the early stages.

Government troops regained control of all areas of Abidjan within 48 hours, however the towns of Boaké and Korhogo remained within the control of the insurgents - who have also gained control of other towns along an east-west axis running through the centre of the Ivory Coast. In the areas affected by conflict, there has been some population displacement noted, however apart from around 2,000 foreign nationals evacuated by French and US military personnel from Bouaké and Korhogo areas, movement is limited. OCHA has indicated possible figures of 700 displaced in Mbahiakro and 500 in Dabakala. However, if agreed, a cease-fire might result in increased population movement.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) responded to strong regional concerns through a regional Contact Group comprised of 6 West African Heads of State who proposed cease-fire between Government and insurgent parties. Unfortunately no agreement has been reached between belligerent parties and fighting resumed in the closing hours of the ECOWAS delegation's presence in the Ivory Coast.

Humanitarian concerns have also arisen from the destruction of makeshift dwellings throughout Abidjan (this began around 20 September reportedly by police and other formal and apparently informal security forces). This has caused an estimated 3,000 persons of various west African nationalities to seek temporary shelter within Abidjan according to the Cote d'Ivoire Red Cross (CRCI) survey figures. Abidjan authorities have announced their intention to destroy all groupings of makeshift dwellings in Abidjan in the next weeks. The international community had generally advised caution. ICRC has expressed its concern with this situation, emphasizing that a viable alternative should be provided to those forced away from the makeshift dwellings.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

In accordance with its mandate and the Movement Agreement, the ICRC has taken the lead in supporting the CRCI to assist victims of the conflict and populations affected by the crisis in the Ivory Coast. The International Federation has concentrated on supporting specific capacity building initiatives for the CRCI, focussing on the current humanitarian situation.

Shortly after the fighting broke out, the CRCI set up emergency telephone hotlines for members of the public requiring assistance. Red Cross volunteers offered basic first aid advice to residents with minor injuries and contacted some hospitals and ambulance services on behalf of others. The CRCI also donated first aid kits provided by the ICRC to the Abidjan Military and University Teaching Hospitals.

The CRCI was asked to lead interagency assessment teams to evaluate the humanitarian situation in Abidjan to compile a database of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and establish their needs. Red Cross volunteers also visited hospitals and health centres in Abidjan to assess the situation including their response capacity.

Based on the assessment data and with the support of the ICRC, the CRCI has distributed essential non-food items to 8 temporary reception centres for IDPs in Abidjan - providing the centres with supplies to assist the most vulnerable (single and/or sick women, children and the elderly) accommodated in the centres until more suitable accommodation can be found for them.

The ICRC was able to send a delegate to Bouaké on 2 October to assess the humanitarian situation within the town. The ICRC has expressed concern regarding the population's access to sufficient food and measures are being envisaged by the ICRC and CRCI to provide food to the most vulnerable in Bouaké.

With the assistance of the ICRC, the national society has conveyed two trucks of the Société de Distribution d'Eau de Côte d'Ivoire (SODECI) from Abidjan to Bouake. The water tanker carried spare parts and chemicals needed to rehabilitate the communal water supply for the 600,000 inhabitants of Bouaké. The CRCI also sent an ambulance with the convoy containing drugs and first aid materials for the Bouake Military Hospital.

The Bouake branch of the national society has a Red Cross ambulance at its disposal to offer first aid and evacuate the wounded to the Military and University hospitals. Red Cross volunteers also provide home care to Bouake residents and assist the Bouake Blood Transfusion Centre in blood collection (the International Federation is supporting the CRCI blood transfusion mobilization activities - including Bouaké - since 2001).

The national society has also mobilized its 39 branches throughout the Ivory Coast - among them the branches in Daloa, Yamoussoukro, Korhogo and Ferké which are in a particularly good position to provide first aid to victims of the conflict.

International Federation support for the Croix Rouge de Côte d'Ivoire to date

The International Federation, in coordination with the ICRC, is supporting the capacity of the CRCI to respond to immediate humanitarian needs in the Ivory Coast - and in the medium-term - as follows :

First aid and relief supplies delivered:

Item	Quantity
Sleeping mats	1,530
Blankets	2,625
First Aid kits (contents for renewing kits)	20

Logistic Support:

- provision of fuel for operations.
- provision of vehicle for headquarters staff .

- provision of 8mt truck.
- funds for repair of 2 four wheel drive field vehicles.

Federation support is intended to enable the CRCI to maintain its disaster response capacity throughout and beyond the present emergency situation; complementing the emergency support of the ICRC to the CRCI as described in this information bulletin.

Further International Federation support for the Côte d'Ivoire Red Cross:

Logistic support:

- upgrading photocopying equipment.
- provision of fuel for operations.

Telecom equipment:

- HF equipment and VHF handheld units for key branches.
- telephone system update for headquarters.
- cellular telephone equipment.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact:

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

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